

FOOD NOTES AND RECORDS OF THE ATLANTIC RIDLEY TURTLE (*LEPIDOCHELYS KEMPI*) FROM LOUISIANA.—As a further contribution to the intensive study of the distribution of the ridley turtle, *Lepidochelys kempi* (Garman) by students of zoogeography and herpetology, especially Dr. Archie Carr (1942, *Proc. New England Zool. Club* 21:1-16; 1954, *Yearbook Amer. Phil. Soc.* p. 138-40; 1955, *Animal Kingdom* 58:146-156; 1957, *Rev. Biol. Trop.* 5:45-61; Carr and Caldwell, 1956, *Am. Mus. Nov.* 1793:1-23), we are presenting these data on its occurrence in Louisiana coastal waters. Liner (1954, *Proc. La. Acad. Sci.* 17:65-84) reported the capture of 11 ridley turtles in Gulf waters of Terrebonne Parish in 1952. Three of the specimens were catalogued in the Tulane University Collections at the time of his publication but are now missing. Three of the remaining eight animals were later added to the Tulane Collections (TU15218, 15219, 15220); the others are not available for study. These 11 specimens, one from the personal collection of Dr. N. C. Negus and R. K. Chipman, one additional record from the Tulane Collections, and one reported by Carr and Caldwell (1958, *Rev. Biol. Trop.* 6: 245-262) make a total of 14 ridleys captured in Louisiana coastal waters from 1952-1958. The materials studied were skeletal elements—carapace, plastron, and skull.

TU 15218. ♀, weight 38½ lbs., April 25, 1952, 20 mi. W. Oyster Bayou, 12 mi. offshore, captured while trawling for shrimp in Terrebonne Parish waters, coll. E. A. Liner.

TU 15219. ♀, weight 58½ lbs., April 25, 1952, 20 mi. W. Oyster Bayou, 12 mi. offshore, captured while trawling for shrimp in Terrebonne Par.

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waters, contained small unfertilized eggs, coll. E. A. Liner.

TU 15220. ♀, no weight, April 25, 1952, near Last Island (Isle Derniere), captured while trawling for shrimp in Terrebonne Par., coll. E. A. Liner.

TU 16831. sex and weight unknown, June, 1954, Lake Borgne, St. Bernard Par., La., coll. unknown.

N. C. Negus specimen. sex and weight unknown, 1958, found dead on Breton Island, Plaquemines Par., La., at the extreme edge of the tidal line, coll. N. C. Negus and R. K. Chipman.

Individual measurements (in mm.) of skeletal elements are in Table 1.

The stomach and intestinal contents of two specimens (TU 15218, TU 15219) are available in the Tulane University collections and pro-

TABLE 1. SKELETAL MEASUREMENTS OF *Lepidochelys kempi* CAUGHT IN LOUISIANA WATERS

Element	TU 15218	TU 15219	TU 15220	TU 16831	NCN
Maximum skull length	161	177	176	97 ¹	179
Max. skull width	113	120	126	70	120
Condyle - premax. length	118	129	137	78	130
Max. carapace length	492	497	548	290	—
Max. carapace width	497	506	572	294	—
Plastron length along curve	381	382	421	237	—

¹ Supraoccipital process broken.

vide some idea of the diet and feeding habits of the ridley turtles. The principal elements of both were moderately macerated fragments of exoskeleton of cancrroid crabs of the genus *Callinectes*, but small molluscs, muscle tissue, plant parts and mud were also encountered.

In one specimen the collector, E. A. Liner, reports that all the crustacean remains, except "a half crab" which was taken from the stomach, were recovered from the intestine. From these intestinal contents we were able to secure several male abdominal appendages in good condition. The appendages were found to be compatible with those of *Callinectes sapidus* and *C. ornatus* as described and illustrated by Mary Rathbun (1930, *USNM Bull.* 152). In addition, gastropods of the genus *Nassarius* were seen, but were too badly eroded to be identifiable to species. A few twigs, a small fragment of dicot wood, and a leaf resembling the genus *Quercus* were found.

A richer molluscan fauna was recovered in the sample of intestinal remains from TU 15219. *Nassarius* was represented, as were three genera of clams: *Nuculana*; *Corbula*; and a mactrid clam, probably of the genus *Mulinia*. This gut also contained several mud balls of about two millimeters diameter.

Both specimens from which gastro-intestinal contents were examined were caught at the same locality on the same date. The molluscan fauna suggests that the two ridleys had fed near a mud bottom in an estuarine or bay situation.

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